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FIFTY-FIRST SESSION

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FIFTH COMMITTEE
55th meeting
held on
Thursday, 27 March 1997
at 11.35 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND PART* OF THE 55th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SENGWE (Zimbabwe)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 119: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

* The summary record of the first part of the meeting, held on Thursday, 27 March 1997, appears as document A/C.5/51/SR.55.

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The meeting was reconvened at 11.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 119: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/C.5/51/L.56)

1. Mr. GJESDAL (Norway), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.56, on which consensus had been reached in informal consultations, invited the members of the Committee to adopt it without a vote, even though it had not yet been issued in all the official languages. Referring to the English text, which was the only one available, he pointed out that the phrase "in accordance with the concept of responsibility to pay" in paragraph 1 (e) (x) should be deleted.

2. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee was ready to take action on the draft resolution.

3. Draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.56, as orally revised, was adopted.

4. Mr. WATANABE (Japan) said that his delegation had expressed its position on the methodology used for calculating the scale in the draft resolution which it had submitted. It would have preferred it if delegations had agreed on a single proposal, but, in view of the difficulties that had been encountered and the importance of the matter, it had agreed to join the consensus that had emerged in the hope that the deliberations of the Committee on Contributions would make it possible to find a solution at the fifty-second session.

5. Mr. MAZEMO (Zimbabwe) expressed his delegation's disappointment at the fact that, owing to a lack of courage or political will, the Committee, far from identifying a set of factors that could result in the establishment of an acceptable scale of assessments, had given up the effort to sort out which proposals represented viable options and which did not.

6. Ms. GOICOCHEA (Cuba), referring to the Spanish version of draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.53, pointed out that in the fourth preambular paragraph, the words "Estados Unidos" appeared where "Estados Miembros" should have been used. Her delegation was aware that the translation had been done under pressure. It believed, nonetheless, that a corrigendum should be issued. More important, adequate provision should be made in the next programme budget to ensure that all the translation services had the full complement of revisers they needed.

7. Mr. HANSON (Canada) confirmed that it was indeed the capacity to pay of Member States in general to which his delegation was referring in the subparagraph in question.

8. Mr. YUSSUF (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the Group of 77 and China welcomed the fact that the Committee had reached a consensus.

9. Mr. ZHANG Wanhai (China) said that the press release reporting on the Committee's deliberations on 24 March 1997 indicated that China had objections to paragraphs 1 (c) and (d) of draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.46*, instead of subparagraphs (c) and (g). The matter was important to his delegation, which hoped that the Secretariat would issue a correction.

10. Ms. POWLES (New Zealand), speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, said that, given the differences of opinion which existed, the Committee had chosen a sensible course of action. The delegations of the three countries had agreed, not without some reluctance, that no option should be dismissed at the current stage in order to give the Member State with the highest assessment time to work out for submission at the fifty-second session convincing proposals which would include a commitment on its part to pay its arrears unconditionally and thereafter to pay its contributions in time and in full. The three delegations hoped that their expectations would not be disappointed.

11. Mr. MENKVELD (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, paid a tribute to the Member States which, having made proposals, had agreed to negotiate in order to achieve a consensus. He invited others to demonstrate the same flexibility at the appropriate time.

12. Mr. BLUKIS (Latvia) said he found particularly ironic the talk of consensus when all that delegations had done was to agree to acknowledge their profound disagreements. He viewed the Committee's decision as a step backward and endorsed the comments made by the representative of Zimbabwe.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 119. He took it that the Committee wished to request the Rapporteur to report directly to the plenary Assembly.

14. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.05 a.m. on 28 March.